

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE YUKON.

LAW AND ORDER PREVAIL

THE YUKON RAILWAY BILL

The Total Expenses in Connection with the Yukon District, from July 1st, 1897 to Dec. 31st, 1899, were \$3,215,765.11 and the Revenue was \$3,869,930.70, or a Balance to the credit of the Government of \$654,165.59.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RECORDS SECTION

GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

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ADMINISTRATION OF THE YUKON.

The political history of the Dominion during the eighteen years the Tories were in power, from 1878 to 1896, is stained with many a shameful record of unblushing corruption. Instances of trafficking in public offices, crooked dealings with contractors, debauching of constituencies, reckless squandering of public funds, etc., abound, and the pages of Hansard contain innumerable records of proceedings in Parliament in which these misdoings were exposed and the absolute proof of them brought home to the guilty parties, among whom were included members of Parliament and even Ministers of the Crown. In addition to the numerous cases conclusively proved, there were many more instances where Liberal members, then in opposition, made definite charges and offered to prove the same before a properly constituted tribunal, but were refused the opportunity by the obedient majority behind the Government. Sufficient was brought home to the Conservative party however, to leave a very bad impression upon the public mind, and this contributed not a little to the overthrow of the Tupper administration in 1896.

Smarting under the castigation then received, the Tupper administration scarcely got accustomed to their new position in the cool shades of opposition, when they began casting about for material out of which to construct charges against their conquerors. Long weary sittings of the Public Accounts Committee were held, and every item scrutinized; witnesses were called from the ends of the earth at great and utterly useless expense to the public treasury; officials were examined and cross examined, and not a dollar could be traced to a wrong purpose, for the good and sufficient reason that there was no crookedness to discover. A great commotion was made over the terms of agreement under which the Drummond County Railway was purchased by the Government as an extension of the Intercolonial, and charges of corruption in connection therewith were freely bandied about in the Tupper press and even on the floor of Parliament. A special committee was appointed by the Government to investigate, and after exhaustive inquiry it was conclusively shown that the transaction was not only absolutely square but decidedly advantageous to the country, and the Opposition crawled out of the mess they were in, by declaring that they never made any charges of corruption. So in many other instances, every charge, and nearly every other insinuation, as far as track could be kept of them, were promptly looked into by the Government and disposed of.

Finally Sir Hibbert Tupper came along with his remarkable Yukon charges. In one speech of seven hours and in another of nine hours dur-

ation, he unfolded a marvelous conglomeration of complaints (which in the latter instance, when summarized occupied an hour and fifteen minutes to formally recite, and filled twenty-two pages of Hansard) against the administration of the Yukon, charging corruption by officials, oppressive taxation, unwise and inefficient legislation, and goodness knows what besides. His indictment was not a straightforward clear cut charge; there was in most cases nothing definite alleged, nothing of the character that would be accepted in any court of justice as a basis of legal investigation. But in all cases where sufficient detail was given to enable the Department to identify the occurrence at all, Mr. Sifton caused the most careful and rigid enquiry to be made, and in every single instance the charge, whatever it was, was shown to be absolutely without justification.

Sir Hibbert Tupper's second attack—for his action was more of the character of a vindictive onslaught than a judicial indictment—was an alleged answer to a challenge uttered by the Minister of the Interior, after Sir Hibbert's first speech, a challenge couched in the following terms:—“Throughout the speech of the Hon. gentleman (Sir Hibbert Tupper) there has been a continuous trend of suggestions that there was some improper or corrupt connection between myself or some member or members of the Government of the Klondike district. I want to say, that I challenge the hon. gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, I challenge the members of his party in the House, I challenge the members of his party outside this House, I challenge the press of his party, to produce their private detectives, to come here upon their responsibility and press their charges; I challenge the member for Pictou, (Sir Hibbert Tupper) or any man in the House to lay upon the table of this House the charges that he has to make and declare his ability to substantiate them by evidence and he will get his investigation, and I will be able to convince the hon. gentleman who makes that charge that discretion on his part would have been the better part of valour.” This clearly was a challenge to lay charges of personal dishonesty or corruption; Sir Hibbert Tupper said he would take up the challenge, but there was not the shadow of a charge of personal corruption in the indictment he presented, and as Mr. Sifton said, “This Government, so far as the question of personal wrong-doing is concerned, needs no better vindication than the fact that the hon. gentleman, after six months, has been compelled to place on the table of this House a resolution which is carefully drawn to avoid in the slightest degree any responsibility for the statement that any member of this house had been corrupt or dishonest.”

A Great Task.

To clearly understand and appreciate the situation which confronted the Government in the Yukon, it is necessary very briefly to recall the circumstances of its opening up. Prior to the accession of the present Government to power practically nothing was known of that country. The late Government had sent Mr. Ogilvie to explore the territory, and

he had reported indications of vast mineral wealth and had advised development operations, but these reports, which should have forwarned the Government and enabled preparations to be made for the inrush which was to come, were pigeon-holed and ignored, until Mr. Sifton took charge of the Department of the Interior. By that time the rush had commenced and the government found itself confronted with an unprecedented situation. It was charged with the administration of a practically unknown and almost inaccessible country, thousands of miles beyond the limit of civilization, where climatic conditions were most severe, where the means of supporting life did not exist, where thousands of the roughest class of men were flocking, men but little amenable to the ordinary restrictions of authority; where the usual methods of government were totally inadequate and where special laws and regulations had to be formulated upon very imperfect knowledge of the conditions existing. "It is a very large task," declared Mr. Sifton in the house, "for a man to undertake the administration of a district like the Yukon. There is no man in this House of Commons to-day, not even my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, who has had to organize a new district, organize a Government, think of everything that has to be thought of in connection with the Government, take a new country and a new people, with nothing done, and think of everything and provide for everything. There has never been a task of that kind before, that one man had to take hold of. Any such avalanche of responsibility as we have had in connection with the Yukon never was thrust upon a Government before."

Speed and Efficiency.

The greatest obstacle to efficient government, namely, the vast distances from the seat of government and the absence of communication and transportation facilities, were also the very conditions which made it possible to instigate and maintain just such an agitation against the Government, as that which disgraced the Opposition and dragged the fair name of Canada in the dust for many months during 1898-1899.

- In any mining camp, even under the most favorable conditions, there are hundreds of unfortunate, unsuccessful adventurers to every one who makes a fortune, and the unlucky ones are ever anxious to blame others for their lack of success. Much more so would this be the case in a country so inaccessible and under such conditions so particularly arduous as these. The inevitable result followed, complaints of all kinds came out, and every official, from the Chief Commissioner down to the humblest private in the police force, was charged with almost every kind of crookedness recognized in the criminal code. The Government at once took such notice of this condition of affairs as was possible in the absence of anything definite.

In issuing instructions to Mr. Ogilvie, the Minister of the Interior gave him a free hand to probe into the complaints of which rumors had come east, and full power to deal with the officials as he found circumstances justified.

Mr. Ogilvie's appointment had been received with a chorus of enthusiastic approval the country over, by Grit and Tory alike. There appeared to be the most absolute confidence in his ability and integrity, and no better evidence of a bona fide desire and determination to remedy any evil that might exist could have been offered by the Minister of the Interior. Then, when at length a definite complaint did reach the Minister for the first time, in the form of the Miner's Petition, a special commission was at once issued to Mr. Ogilvie to investigate, and was on its way to Dawson by special messenger within a week of the receipt of the petition. Subsequently other inquiries were held; inquiries into complaints against Gold Commissioner Fawcett, Gold Commissioner Senkler, Crown Prosecutor F. C. Wade, and others; and in every case, though all endeavour was made to get at the bottom of the complaints and discover any crookedness, not a single charge could be established against any official. In many cases those complaining, knowing that their complaints were frivolous, declined to appear against the accused, in others they admitted there was nothing in their complaints which they had supposed would be taken any notice of, and in others again all available evidence was taken and the allegations completely exploded.

All this cost money, and the Government was put to great expense with no corresponding advantage to the country. When therefore Sir Hibbert Tupper produced his remarkable collection of nebulous charges, based on rumor, hearsay evidence, and anonymous letters, and demanded a commission of judges to investigate, the Government naturally and very properly demurred. "Formulate something definite," they said, "and we will give you your commission." This has never been done yet and the Government knowing that the whole attack was simply a campaign of political mud-throwing, refused to permit a further waste of public funds. No Government in the history of Canada has shown itself so ready to investigate. Time and time again, as instanced above, inquiry has been ordered, thousands of dollars have been spent and not a solitary charge has been proved.

Sample of Fault Finding.

After all is said and done, what do the charges amount to? There has been such an extraordinary amount of noise and bustle over this business that many no doubt honestly believe that there must be something in it, upon the principle that where there is smoke there is also fire. Though no commission of judges has been granted the considerable amount of investigating which has been done has gathered voluminous evidence that throws much light on the points at issue. Take a sample case or two.

Sir Hibbert Tupper asserted that Hon. Clifford Sifton was guilty of "scandalous neglect, delay and mismanagement in the administration of his department in the Yukon District." Mr. Sifton became Minister of the Interior in November, 1896, though it was the following January before

he really took over the work. In March, the first intimation of the needs of the Yukon reached him. By May, the earliest possible moment that travel into the territory was practicable, Major Walsh and his staff were sent in. As the Minister showed when in enumerating the list of appointments to the House, (April 4th, 1899) every member of that staff was chosen for his special fitness for the duties required of him, and no consideration of political preference had any weight whatever. The Tories charged that the Minister appointed officials who were "incapable, and corrupt to positions requiring experience and technical knowledge." The facts however show the direct contrary.

It has been frequently alleged that when Mr. Sifton assumed control of this work he found Mr. Ogilvie in charge in the Yukon and replaced him by Major Walsh. This is utterly incorrect. Mr. Ogilvie never was in charge in the Yukon and was never in any way recognized by the Conservatives in that capacity. He was sent out there as a topographical surveyor in connection with the boundary survey, and had no connection with the Yukon district. Owing to the splendid impression he had made, however, Mr. Ogilvie would have been placed in charge by Mr. Sifton had he been willing, but he asked to be relieved on account of ill health, and was given twelve months leave of absence, Major Walsh accepting a temporary appointment in the meantime.

Sir Hibbert Tupper alleged in his scurrilous indictment that "the chief authority in the Yukon was reposed in the man whose official record did not justify an appointment to any position of trust." If this refers to Major Walsh, it can only be said that the Tory papers were loud in their approval when the appointment was made. Moreover it is not true that there was any flaw in the official record of Major Walsh. Even were it true, it would not have reflected discredit on the Government who at the time of his appointment held Major Walsh in the same high esteem in which he was held by their opponents of the Tupper press. In this connection it is worth noting too, that on the only occasion when the electors had an opportunity of expressing an opinion, namely, at a bye-election in Brockville, Major Walsh's home, the seat held for twenty years by the Tories was captured by a Government supporter, with a majority running into the hundreds, a result largely due to the indignation of Major Walsh's townsmen at the manner in which he had been maligned.

Sir Hibbert the Tool of Fakirs.

It was further charged by Sir Hibbert Tupper "that the Minister of the Interior had been guilty of favoritism and partiality in the administration of the Yukon laws and regulations." In proof thereof Sir Hibbert quoted a list of leases alleged to have been granted to men who at one time were business partners of the Minister. Even had it been true that these gentlemen obtained the leases, that would have been no evidence of partiality or favoritism, as all applications go through the hands of the permanent officials and are dealt with under fixed regulations, the Minis-

ter having no knowledge of them whatever ; but the fact is that the leases were not granted. (Hansard, 1899, page 6131). Nor was a tittle of evidence offered to show any ground even for suspicion for the other insinuations, for that is all they amounted to, against the Minister in relation to any dealings he is alleged to have had with personal friends. Take for example the charge that gross abuses had prevailed in connection with the issue of liquor permits, that the Minister had granted special privileges to personal friends and prevented others who held permits to take liquor into the Yukon until those friends had completed their arrangements to get a share of the business. Mr. Sifton proved by the official returns that this had not occurred, and showed that the very opposite was the fact.

One of the few charges against the Minister in reference to the appointment of officials which was sufficiently definite to be taken hold of and answered, was that Messrs. McGregor and Norwood, appointed on Major Walsh's original staff as mining inspectors, "had no experience for the work and were incompetent and untrained." Special and peculiar duties were required of these men, the chief of which was the collection of the royalty. Graduates of a mineralogical college were not needed, but men who were accustomed to the hardships and privations experienced in sub-arctic travel, and who were able to handle and control the rough elements invariably found in pioneer mining camps. Messrs. McGregor and Norwood were admirably qualified in these particulars, and their appointment was justified by their subsequent record. It is now admitted that both of these men have been most competent and efficient officers.

A Missionary's View.

These are the principal counts in the so-called indictment of the Government ; the balance are directed against officials, and reference has been made already thereto. Scores of competent, reliable and unbiased witnesses have come out, who testified to the efficient and honorable service being rendered by these men, witnesses in no way dependent upon the Government for consideration or favor, and whose character and calling placed their integrity beyond question. Take one of the latest of these—Rev. John Pringle, who has been laboring for three or four years in the territory as a Missionary of the Presbyterian Church. Mr. Pringle declares in a published interview :—" *The Government have done well in their administration of the Yukon.* As to the charges of mal-administration, I consider them greatly exaggerated. Anything of the kind that occurred was only what was inseparable from the circumstances of the new country being opened up and officials being appointed for duties and conditions which were entirely new. *The manner in which order has been kept, and the law administered, has been the admiration of all except the rascals whose schemes and aims have been frustrated.*" One of the complaints, by-the-way, formulated by Sir Hibbert Tupper was to the effect that grave scandals and abuses occurred in the Customs and

Post Office Departments in the Yukon. This was thoroughly investigated by Major Walsh and also by Commissioner Ogilvie, and all that resulted was the conviction of a constable for taking a \$2.00 bribe. At the time of these complaints the Postmaster was Capt. Harper of the Mounted Police, a Conservative appointment. On the question of the mail service Mr. Pringle says: "I have had some correspondence with Mr. Mulock, and have been able to aid him with a little information and advice as to the Yukon mail service, and I have found him quite willing to meet more than half way the needs and wishes of the Yukon people. The manner in which he took hold of the question of mail service there has convinced me that he is an extraordinarily efficient man for his position. He dispensed with red tape and gave his subordinates at Skaguay and other points instructions to put things right and they were put right."

Of the necessity of an all Canadian railway Mr. Pringle declares, "If I were a politician I would stake my political future on the construction of a railway through the Yukon country. At present the Yankees have a cinch on us, and the Canadians should hasten to avail themselves of the extraordinarily rich heritage which has been given them."

Of himself Mr. Pringle says, "My work has been for the past year in the Atlin District, on the northern boundary of British Columbia, and the two years before that I was working east of Dawson in the Glenora, Teslin and Hootalinqua Districts; I leave for the west again the end of this month to return to Atlin, and later in the year go to the Creeks around Dawson. My field is one demanding hard work and exposure. I have done more snowshoeing than falls to the lot of most missionaries; I have been forty-one days on snowshoes without a break."

It is clear from the above that Mr. Pringle was in a position to know whereof he spoke, and even a Tupper will scarcely venture to impugn his character and trustworthiness.

A Fair-Minded Man.

Another witness that will be accepted without reservation by all fair-minded men is Judge Dugas. On his arrival at Ottawa he was asked his opinion of the complaints of which so much had been heard. "When I started for the Yukon territory" replied the Judge "I had to acknowledge that I was like many others who did not know better, very suspicious that something wrong existed. I did not know then the people who were accused. On the spot I had heard again some gossips talk. It will be remembered that there was a Dawson newspaper more particularly which was very aggressive and very persistent in its accusations. This paper was then the property of two young Americans coming from Seattle, and their editor and those who were responsible for the contributions appearing in it, were also foreigners. I do not like to be personal, but it should be known here as well as in Dawson that one of the proprietors, who by the way was socially a pleasant fellow, was obliged to leave suddenly for parts unknown, after having received, according to statements made, about

\$30,000, from miners to send outside, and for which he has failed to give any account ; that the editor in question, who was the leading spirit of the attacks, after having been obliged to run away from Dyea in order to escape arrest, and bearing in all places in the United States where he had been previously a bad reputation, continued in Dawson to live in the same way that he had done elsewhere. He was well known to be a black-mailer who used his pen to get money under threats, and did many other things the details of which I do not care to mention, but who also had to leave the territory suddenly. The sub-editor was a gay man, full of socialistic ideas and exaggerations. One of the proprietors, about a week before leaving, said in my presence to one of those officials whom he had been accusing of all sorts of wrong-doing, that he had done his utmost to find proof against him, and would have been very glad to have published it if he had succeeded, but was now in honor bound obliged to declare that he had failed."

"I could mention the dealings of another class who, while pretending to take the part of the people, always managed to take the best for themselves. One of them more particularly is well known to have loaned money at the rate of 12% per month. I may say that some of them are now going to stand their trials on very serious accusations, although I will not imagine in advance that they are guilty." (This is a hint that Sir Hibbert Tupper might profit by).

"Take the McTavish charges," continued Judge Dugas, "against Gold Commissioner Senkler, whom everybody knows is greatly respected. The charge was of the most unscrupulous and baseless kind. So much so was this the case, that after four or five sittings of the investigation, McTavish was not to be found, and was supposed to have disappeared from the territory, either out of shame for the course he had taken, or because he was afraid of being prosecuted for criminal libel."

"I have read the different letters which Parliament has patiently listened to. Does it not strike anyone that they have been written either by soured men or hysterical persons? The writers are known in Dawson, and there is one to which I more particularly refer, and whose letter covers a few pages of Hansard. When the investigation was ordered in the charges against the late officials, every opportunity was given to prove them, but when they came to the serious point they found that what they had heard was only gossip, invented by people who had been dissatisfied, and who, after asking for a bit of the moon found fault because it was not given to them. No witnesses could be found. The fact is I believe there never were any. What is more noticable, to those who were in Dawson at the time of this investigation, is that the parties who tried to establish the accusations were exactly the same class of persons to whom I have already referred. At all events as matters stand, I think it is only fair to those who have been accused to say that they all stand well in our community, and are respected, just as they were before going to the Territory.

"The respectable portion of the people, who are asking for a change

of policy, strongly object to being classed with the agitators. They consider themselves honored when in the company and enjoying the friendship of the accused. Just take the names of the officials who are there now, beginning with Commissfoner Ogilvie, his Secretary Dr. Brown Fred Wade, Crown Prosecutor, Comptroller Lithgow, Gold Commissioner Senkler, Legal Adviser Clement, Registrar Gorouard, Land Agent Gosse- lin, Post Master Hartman, Major Walsh, Major Steele who is now in South Africa, Captain Norwood, James D. McGregor, Captain Bliss, Major Perry, who has just been appointed to the command of the Mounted Police, Major Wood, and others. All these have borne high reputations before going into the Yukon, and why should they be subjected to suspicion as soon as they reach Dawson?

"There have been some frauds committed no doubt, but these were by employees whose positions permitted them to be dishonest without the knowledge of those who were over them. As soon as it was ascer- tained that this was so they were dismissed, and I have reason to know that whatever they acquired in such a way will be taken from them if the law permits it, and they will be criminally prosecuted besides. These officials were dismissed as soon as their offences were discovered. It should not be lost sight of that small things and matters of very little im- portance on the spot, are magnified to an enormous extent at a distance, and this is what strikes me concerning the affairs of the Yukon territory here."

Similar testimony might be multiplied indefinitely and that testimony is unanimous in praise of the marvellous law and order which prevails. Old miners with world wide experience agree that so well governed a mining country has never existed before. Life and property are as safe in Daw- son and the country outside as they are in Ottawa, the business of the various departments of Government is administered promptly, efficiently and courteously, the Courts are well officered and the laws impartially administered to Canadian born and alien alike, and it is now admitted that the complaints and dissatisfaction that undoubtedly existed earlier in the history of the territory, were, as already stated, the outcome of indi- vidual loss and disappointment, and that the officials of the Crown have performed their particularly trying duties, honestly impartially and capably. The administration of the Yukon has been perhaps the most intricate problem that any minister of the Crown was ever called upon to solve, but abundant evidence is accumulating to prove that it is being accomplished in a manner which reflects credit upon the Government and will prove a lasting benefit to the country.

The Yukon Railway Bill.

Early in the session of 1898, when the attention of the civilized world was being attracted to the Yukon gold fields and thousands of hardy miners were struggling to effect an entrance into that frozen region

over the ice-bound and almost inaccessible passes at Skaguay and Dyea, the assistance of the Federal Government was sought to secure, if it were possible, improved facilities of transportation. The case was for many reasons one that justified, and indeed called for, Government aid. The marvellous discoveries being made in this hitherto unknown territory had created a gold fever the world over, unequalled in recent years, and the crowds of adventurers that were making their way in were enduring terrible hardships, attended by great loss of life. It was not optional with the Government whether attention should be given to these people or not; the distress was so great that aid was imperative, as subsequently shown by the fact that tens of thousands of dollars had to be expended in their relief, in that compulsory aid which the Government of any civilized country would be forced to extend to any unfortunates thus stranded within its borders.

Moreover, this vast influx, nine-tenths of which were foreigners, meant millions of dollars of trade; that trade was being captured by American cities because there was no Canadian route; not only were the existing routes bad, but they lay partly through American territory, and the States held the trade. It became, therefore, a matter of prime importance that an all Canadian route should be mapped out and operated as quickly as possible. Urgency was a dominating feature of the situation, a practical route fully equipped and in operation before the ensuing winter set in was imperative. At this juncture the proposition was submitted to the Government by Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann, a firm of well known railway contractors, to construct a railway from Glenora or Telegraph Creek, on the Stikine River, north to Teslin Lake, from which the water route to Dawson offered no serious obstacle. The terms of the proposed contract provided that a good waggon road should be put through immediately, and that the railway itself should be completed by the following September, in ample time to accommodate the rush which was to be anticipated as soon as the winter set in. The concessions to the contractors, as finally agreed upon and submitted to the House, were a grant of 25,000 acres per mile of land in the territory, and a reduction of the royalty on the gold taken out to one per cent.

The Tories offered strenuous opposition to the measure embodying this proposition when it was brought before the House. Briefly their alleged objections were as follows:—

(1) That access to the southern terminus of the proposed road was through American waters, and therefore subject to the control of a foreign power. This was not a fact, inasmuch as existing treaties give Canada equal rights with the States over the waters of the Stikine River, and moreover it was never intended to leave the terminus of the railway at Telegraph Creek; as soon as the main road was completed a southern extension was to be undertaken which would carry the line down to Fort Simpson, Alice Inlet, Kitimat Arm or some other convenient point in Canadian waters. Moreover, Sir Charles Tupper himself, in an interview published in the Toronto Mail and Empire, admitted that "he did not

anticipate any trouble with the United States in transferring cargoes from the ocean boats to the river boats at Wrangel,"—the port at the mouth of the Stikine River. On the other hand, access to the routes on the Lynn Canal are not only through United States waters, but over United States lands as well, and Canadian traders and others taking in goods by this, the only practical route, have from the beginning experienced every kind of vexatious interference from American customs officers at these points.

(2) The second objection was that the route was impracticable, and if built would prove useless. The best answer to this, coming from Tory critics, is Sir Charles Tupper's own opinion as published by the Mail, January 28th, 1898, as follows:—"He," (Sir Charles), "stated that the route is the best that could have been selected. 'When I was in the west,' he said, 'I made inquiries, and I reached the conclusion that Canada ought at the earliest possible moment to have communication with the Yukon. I impressed upon the British Columbia Government that it should co-operate with the Dominion Government to insure the construction of a link between the Stikine River and Teslin Lake. At Winnipeg I declared that the undertaking was a necessity, and when I returned to Ottawa I went immediately to Mr. Sifton. I impressed upon him the absolute necessity of opening up the route to secure Canadian trade. I said to him, 'you heard my argument against Government construction on the Crow's Nest Pass Railway. I am willing to withdraw all that if you will go ahead and give that country a railroad. As a matter of principle I am opposed to Government construction, but here is a case in which I quite concede the country ought to be prepared, if necessary, to build a road in order to secure an all Canadian route and to secure the trade of the Yukon for Canada.'"

(3) The third objection was, that too great haste was shown by the Government in closing the contract, haste which prevented an opportunity being given to others to tender in competition. Again Sir Charles is on record, for the Mail reports him as follows:—"As to the arrangements made with Messrs. Mackenzie & Mann, Sir Charles Tupper said that they were men that had capital, resources and energy to carry it out. They were probably the only men in Canada who could put the undertaking through in the time that was specified." In this connection it is worth noting, as a sample of the methods adopted by the Tories in discussing this and most other questions, that when the matter was before the country it was frequently alleged that the Government had received other and more advantageous offers which it had refused to consider. This was, of course, untrue, and no proof of the assertion has ever been attempted; on the contrary, the Minister of the Interior explained to the House that efforts had been made to secure competition, but no one else could be found to tender. The fabrication was, however, persisted in at the time; now it, like many others, has been dropped; its originators know—have known all along—that it had no foundation in fact.

(4) The fourth and main objection was that the proposed land grant

was excessive. This was the piece de resistance of the Conservative criticism, and the shameless manner in which the fabulous riches of the Yukon were to be handed over, body and bones, to the contractor, was painted in lurid colors from every platform and in every opposition journal. Such superlatives, however, are not warranted by the facts, as a brief examination will demonstrate. In the first place the extent to which the auriferous ores were present in the country was absolutely unknown, and the value of the lands was therefore problematical in the highest degree. Not an acre could be selected before ten miles of the road were completed and working; this would not have been until the middle of June at the earliest, so that for six months anybody and everybody else who desired could go in and make selection. Then the selections had to be made in alternate blocks, which not only disposed of the fairy story that half the gold-producing lands of the entire territory would pass into the hands of the company, but it also gave the general miner the advantage of the exploration and discoveries of the company's prospectors. There was to be no cash subsidy—not a dollar, and the railway, which even the Opposition admitted was most necessary, would have cost the country nothing, for no territory already staked out and paying royalty could be touched. Perhaps nothing more conclusive could be deduced to negative the assertion that the grant would be excessive, than the fact that a provincial charter was in existence at the time, and is still in existence, granting similar powers to the Cassiar Central Company to build a line over this route, with a grant of 10,240 acres a mile, and strenuous efforts to raise the necessary money for the enterprise have resulted in absolute failure. It is a fact, too, that in the two years which have passed since the bill was thrown out, no attempt has been made to take up the lands in question, they are still lying idle, whereas in the hands of enterprising men they would now have become a valuable asset to the country, both in the population and capital they would have attracted, and in the royalty they would have produced. The development of the country has been thrown back very many years. Moreover, it was never suggested that if the Mackenzie-Mann contract was not ratified, better terms would be offered by other capitalists, nor have such better terms been offered up to the present moment.

The passage of the bill through the Lower House, where it was eventually adopted by an overwhelming majority, was marked by probably the most notorious and barefaced lobbying in the history of the Canadian Parliament. This was engineered by Americans in the interest of the Pacific Coast cities, whose merchants knew well enough that millions of dollars of trade would be captured from them by their Canadian rivals, if the road was built. The Liberals in the Commons were true to their country and resisted the pressure thus brought to bear, but when the bill reached the Senate the machinations of the American lobbyists proved successful with the Tory majority, and the bill was thrown out. As a result the trade of the past two years has remained largely in American hands, and what Canadian trade there is, is at the mercy of the

American customs officers at Skaguay. The American ports on the Lynn Canal have been built up at the expense of the Dominion, and Canada is to-day without a port of entry into that rich and ever-increasingly valuable country.

Finally, and as proof conclusive that the policy of the Government in advocating the granting of the Mackenzie-Mann charter under the terms of the proposed bill, was a wise and far-seeing one, the action of Sir Charles Tupper the following session may be cited. Realizing at length, and when, alas, it was too late to undo the mischief, the irreparable injury done to Canada by the rejection of the bill by the Senate at his instigation, Sir Charles made a remarkable speech in the House, on July 22nd, 1899, in the course of which he urged the Government to introduce a bill providing for the construction of a railway from Kitimat Arm to Dawson, i. e., over the identical route proposed in the Mackenzie-Mann project. His explanation of his complete change of front was that he "had not previously understood the matter." The Premier, in reply, very justly claimed that the Opposition leader's statement was "the best vindication we ever had of our policy in that respect," at the same time pointing out the tremendous loss Canada had sustained through the inability of the Opposition "to understand the matter" at the time it was first before the House, and adding: "It is my deliberate conviction at this moment, and after the further knowledge which I have obtained of all the facts, that if ever a crime was committed against the interests of Canada it was committed by the rejection of the Yukon Railway Bill by the Senate of Canada."